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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MTS
PASS TO PEACE CORPS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [CASC](#) [ASEC](#) [RP](#)
SUBJECT: COURT CONVICTS MURDERER OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER

REF: A. 07 MANILA 2076 (ARROYO CONFERS AWARDS ON PEACE CORPS)
 B. 07 MANILA 1358 (MEDAL OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER)
 C. 07 MANILA 1308 (FOREIGN SECRETARY'S REMARKS AT PCV MEMORIAL)
 D. 07 MANILA 1281 (FILIPINOS MOURN LOSS OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER)
 E. 07 MANILA 1232 (PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR VISITS PHILIPPINES)

1. (U) SUMMARY: On June 30, a Banaue regional trial court convicted Juan Donald Duntugan for the April 2007 murder of Peace Corps volunteer Julia Campbell and sentenced Duntugan to "reclusion perpetua," or up to 40 years in prison -- essentially a life sentence. The judge also ordered the defendant to pay 39.7 million pesos (USD 882,450) in civil liabilities and damages to the victim's family. The judge decided that the condition of the slain Peace Corps volunteer's body warranted elevation of the conviction from manslaughter to murder. This decision came just 15 months after Juan Donald Duntugan confessed to the killing. Julia Campbell's murder sparked intense empathy from political figures and media alike, recollecting the invaluable role of the Peace Corps mission in the Philippines over the last 47 years. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) Julia Campbell, a Peace Corps volunteer just two months short of finishing her two-year tour in the Philippines, disappeared on April 8, 2007, while hiking in the Banaue rice terraces in northern Luzon. After an intense police and military search organized and led by RSO, her severely beaten body was recovered in the Banaue area. On April 27, Juan Donald Duntugan surrendered to the police, claiming that in a fit of rage he mistook Campbell for someone else.

3. (U) After the guilty verdict, Ambassador Kenney expressed the U.S. Government's satisfaction that the case had come to a close, noting that "the Peace Corps would continue the work that had been so meaningful to (Julia)." Julia's sister attended the Banaue court's promulgation hearing on behalf of the Campbell family and said that Julia's family and friends were very pleased with the court's guilty decision.

4. (SBU) COMMENT: The relative speed of the Campbell trial, completed after only 15 months, and the extraordinary cooperation between the Philippine government and the Peace Corps throughout the search, investigation, and prosecution demonstrates the value and importance of the Peace Corps mission to the Filipino people. More than 8,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in the Philippines since 1961, leaving lasting legacies in 38 provinces throughout the country.

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KENNEY